

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT

W·J·PHILLIPS



W. J. PHILLIPS

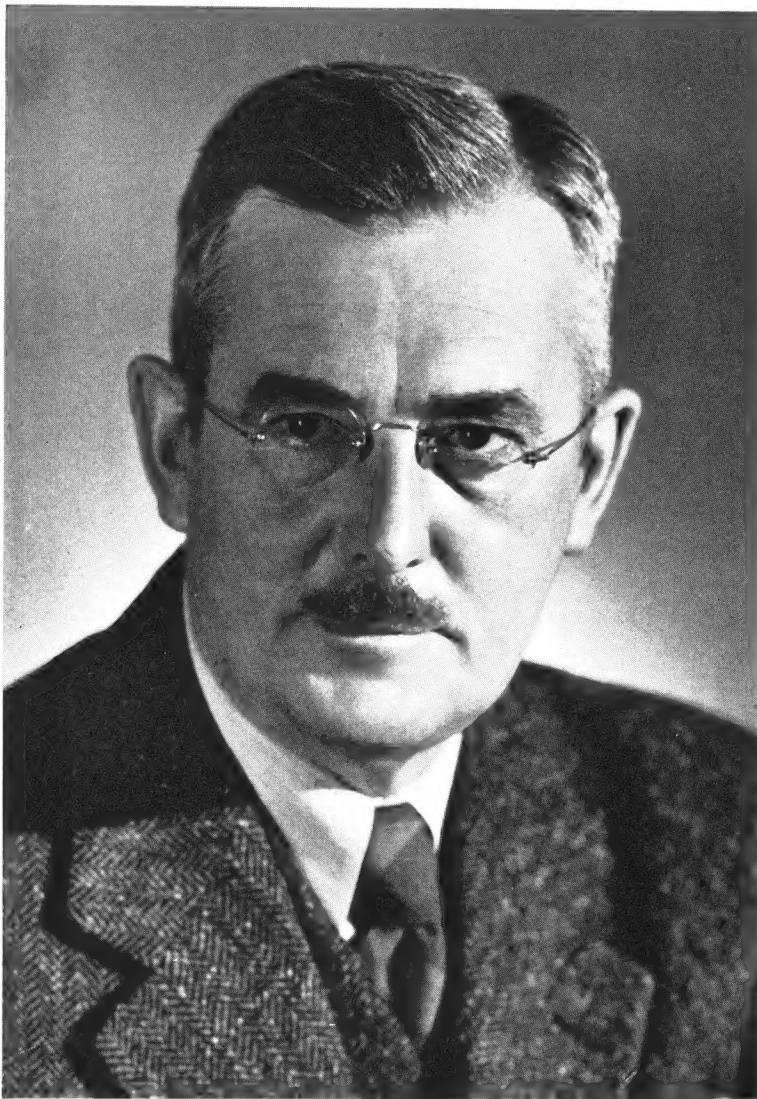
SCOTT

RIVERSON

CANADIAN ART SERIES



WALTER J. PHILLIPS



WALTER J. PHILLIPS, R.C.A.

WALTER J. PHILLIPS

By DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT



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LAKE MCARTHUR

Water colour. The Art Association of Montreal.

Courtesy of The Canadian Pacific Railway Co.



WALTER J. PHILLIPS

IN beginning this monograph on the life and work of Walter J. Phillips, I should like to quote a few sentences from his written words, they have been many, have been one means of self-expression and as they came from a cultivated and liberal mind they have a quality of inestimable value in forming the individual taste of the reader and in concentrating the point of view on things of vital importance in the Arts "Surprise is an essential element of beauty" "Colour is a secondary thing in art, form is essential Colour exists only by virtue of light, form is eternal . Yet colour remains the most expressive agent the artist employs and the most flexible" "Painting has always been a compromise, and its theory a matter of controversy and because it is controversial, critics and commentators continue to thrive while artists bravely materialize their theories on a diet of crusts"

I chose these quotations as a starting point for what must be a discursive article on a varied subject, for of all our important artists Mr Phillips has been the most inventive in different media. These quotations will not form texts for what follows but at the outset give examples of what he would, no doubt, claim as the least of his titles to attention and praise I may agree, but his written words are part of his artistic record and should be considered The contributions to the Press covering many years, should some day be made available between covers and the reader who is familiar with even one of his pictures would find in his words the same feeling for truth to nature, for the beauty of form and colour and for the essentials of great Art He will find, too, many evidences of Canadianism in the best sense of that much used

and abused term and his words go with his pictures and entitle us to claim him as a Canadian although he was neither blessed nor hampered by Canadian ancestry or birthplace

When he came to this country he had had a varied experience but he adopted our roughish life, our fierce climate, and our uncultivated landscape which had no romantic or traditional associations as a natural home for a genius that was virile enough to contend with them and, in so far as they can be overcome, to conquer them. No one knows better than he the social life of Western Canada and no one has depicted more faithfully or lovingly the landscape and its human associations from the prairies to the Pacific coast. So we fairly claim him, as of right a Canadian

But his ancestry and the life which is a background of his personality are important and interesting and they must be recorded

Walter Joseph Phillips was born on October 25th, 1884 at Barton-on-Humber, Lincolnshire. The birthplace of a Methodist minister's son in the days of the itinerancy is fortuitous, it may be here or there, it carries with it no ancestral ties or even lengthy residence. His father's family was of North Wales and his mother was of Leeds, Yorkshire. So that we may claim him as a North-country man for that section of England and Wales that unites the island from the Wash to Dolgellau

The Reverend John Phillips was born and brought up at Gwilsfield near Welshpool, Montgomeryshire. His father and grandfather were farmers and their two farms were in possession of the family until they were sold lately when the estate of the artist's father was disposed of. I cannot find that our artist, after he was old enough to be observant, spent many days in that district. Welshpool, the assize-town of Montgomeryshire in the upper valley of the Severn, is a busy place and to this writer it

came with surprise to find himself suddenly, while motoring from Church Shetton in Shropshire to Dolgelley, in the midst of such a centre of activity. That part of Wales has no share in the beauty associated with its wild mountain scenery but there are mountains thereabouts and the district has its own charm.

Barton-on-Humber is a busy port and the painter's infancy and youth were spent there and at Louth, Haworth, and Cleethorpes. The latter place is on the sea and has no associations with the world of either painters or writers. I have never been at Louth but I like to think of it as not far from Lincoln and the greatest of the English cathedrals. There are memories of Tennyson at Louth where he went to school with his brother and it was a Louth bookseller who published in 1827 their book *The Poems of Two Brothers*.

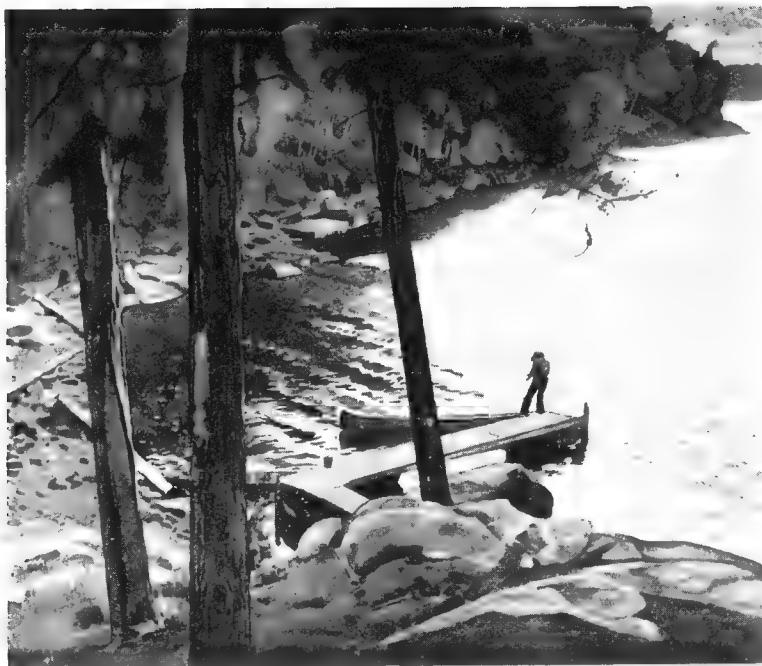
In Phillips' boyhood Tennyson was Poet Laureate and near the end of his career, and Louth had its small share in his development. Whether that memory of the great poet was, in 1892 and beyond that year, ever made much of in the schoolrooms of Louth I cannot say, it may have begun to fade.

But the town has one possession that does not depend on the memory of literary critics and schoolmasters. The great spire of the 16th century perpendicular church (St Peter's) lifts every beholder up from the modern and the sordid. The immortal Turner has fixed it, soaring above the bustle and chattering of the market place, in one of the engravings in his *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. Any child must be conscious of the presence of such an object whether he realizes the beauty or not and I record it as the first treasure of all the riches which England was to spread before the eyes of our artist as his talent unfolded.

If the literary associations at Louth are meagre, they are strong at Haworth. There was the very home of the Bronte family and in the rooms of that house, plain in its sternness, words

were written that are as alive as the day they were penned To imagine the boy Phillips with his innate love for beauty restricted to the bleak village of Haworth is depressing, maybe he was old enough to escape to the moors that were Emily Bronte's inspiration They could have fostered, however unconsciously, that feeling for the charm of distance and the unity in landscape which is one of the powers which the kind fates bestowed on him, but in any event they could give him one of his first sensations of wandering in spaces unconfined and would develop his physique which is that of a mountaineer

The change in the home of his itinerant father to Burton-on-Trent was the beginning of our artist's career That city was the most important both as to industry and population, in which the family established itself It is world famous for its beer and does not claim any importance as a nursery for painters, but it was there that young Phillips first touched the outskirts of the artistic life The city had an art school and he was old enough to attend the evening classes The headmaster took a personal interest in this talented lad and now Phillips can think of that time as a year spent in a new and exciting world of art Then he was sent to Bourne College, a boarding-school near Birmingham The teaching in art was perfunctory there and it is no wonder that he became proficient in cricket and football rather than in drawing but the desire for self-expression in that mode was latent and strong and when in his second year at Bourne College he won a scholarship in mathematics he naturally spent the money for tuition on one afternoon a week at the Birmingham School of Art. The Art Gallery there is noted for its collection of water-colours, David Cox a chief pride, and for its acquisition of paintings by Burne-Jones and the Pre-Raphaelites. It is unimportant to work out a table of dates to show that any of these later pictures might have been seen by Phillips for there are



Courtesy of Mrs. R. W. Steele, Westmount, P.Q.

FALCON LAKE

Water colour

none of their peculiarities traceable in his work but the beauty and quiet power of the incomparable English water-colourists must have influenced a latent but as yet undeveloped talent akin to these masters, these silent teachers. No great attention was paid to this student but rumours have reached him that reproductions of his later pictures are hanging there now.

It is an opinion, not alone the delusion of Methodist parsons, that painting should be considered useless and effeminate, it has too often obstructed and sometimes foiled talent or genius in all the Arts. Phillips had to meet and overcome that opposition in its most aggravated form for it is all very well to be told that you cannot use the powers you find stirring strongly within you but it is extreme to have the course of your life directed arbitrarily into a rigid canal. On the one hand he could have had parental support in a University career if it were to end in the clerical garb and orthodox Methodism, on the other, he could stick to his ambition to be a painter upheld only by his ability and determination. He chose for himself and for us the better part and when he left Bourne College his education was finished as far as his father was concerned. I like to think that his mother, who was the daughter of a wool factor in Leeds, was on his side in this contention. Her son describes her as having "taste and a love of art inspired by the paintings hanging in her father's house." That slender description is enough to claim that his creative faculty, his own instinctive feeling which was much more than taste, came from her side of the house.

However, his education was to go forward on its own pre-destined line, happily enough. He became an usher at Yarmouth College and for a year taught Latin and arithmetic for an annual salary of £20. That year may have been a period of reflection with his basic ambition still active. Before he went to Yarmouth he had been first in drawing for two years at the examinations

of the College of Preceptors, that was an evidence of real talent and at Bourne College he had won a prize of £20 for general efficiency. That money he had saved and when his uncle, a schoolmaster in South Africa, suggested that he should go there those pounds paid his way. He went with youthful visions of making enough money to pay for a period of training in Paris, the ruling passion still strong. Five years in South Africa did not produce that 'enough money' and he returned to England with only a little more than he set out with. If he found no artistic stimulus in South Africa he had valuable training in the art of living. With that strong bent ever toward desire to translate what he saw into form and colour and with the underlying conviction that somehow and somewhen he was going to be a painter his rough usage in South Africa set his manly character and his self-reliance. There he had been a newspaper reporter (*The Diamond Fields' Advertiser*), a surveyor's assistant, a peripatetic trader in South West Grinqualand, a lawyer's clerk and a diamond digger, so that on his return he could face the complexities of English life with a fresh outlook, with little cash but with a knowledge of how the problem of living could be met and solved.

Even the first attempt towards a solution took a line parallel to his main ambition, he took up work in Manchester as a commercial artist and continued it for a year. Then he resigned and went to London where he assaulted the great town as a "free-lance". That is his own description of his warfare in those days, I am not informed whether his lance was a pen or pencil. At the end of his effort he found his funds reduced to about a pound and wisely decided that his lance was splintered and could no longer be used effectively against metropolitan life.

In the lives of many successful artists we can fix a turning-point from whence the path can definitely be traced to an ambition realized, the end not to be reached without trial and effort, per-

haps never fully realized, but a point from which onward the road begins to clear and a congenial distance unfold. Such a point I find fixed in the appointment of Phillips as Art Master at Bishop Woodsworth School, Salisbury. It is the County town of Wiltshire and on market days there is bustle enough and on ordinary days an air of quiet living. If essential tranquillity is to be found anywhere in England it will be found in the surroundings of the Cathedral. I find tranquillity, the sense of rest and peace, more often present in space than in confinement and the Cathedral close is spacious enough to belie the term and to give the noble church room for its beauty to rest in absolute calm and for the spirit also to rest. A few characters in a novel of Thomas Hardy think of the city as Melchester in that imaginary and immortal district of Wessex. This literary allusion seemed inevitable in writing of Salisbury. They were unquiet and even tortured spirits, those that led their imaginary lives thereabouts and I do not recall the place as a city of refuge for them. I cannot say that our artist was conscious of these ghostly presences although *Jude the Obscure* was published before he came to Salisbury, or whether he would now join me in a memory of the tranquillity which the Cathedral close evoked. That may be recorded as merely the impression of a casual visitor, for Phillips the five years he spent at Bishop Woodsworth School were years of activity and development. They were years of high importance. There he met an artist of his own age, Ernest Carlos, who had studied at the Royal Academy School and who had the knowledge and training that Phillips lacked and he gratefully acknowledges the debt he owes Carlos. There was advice and direction and emulation in the best traditions, the tradition of friendship and the tradition of the methods, and ideals of the Masters. In Wiltshire and Somersetshire there is outspread a countryside of sufficient variety to give opportunity to the land-

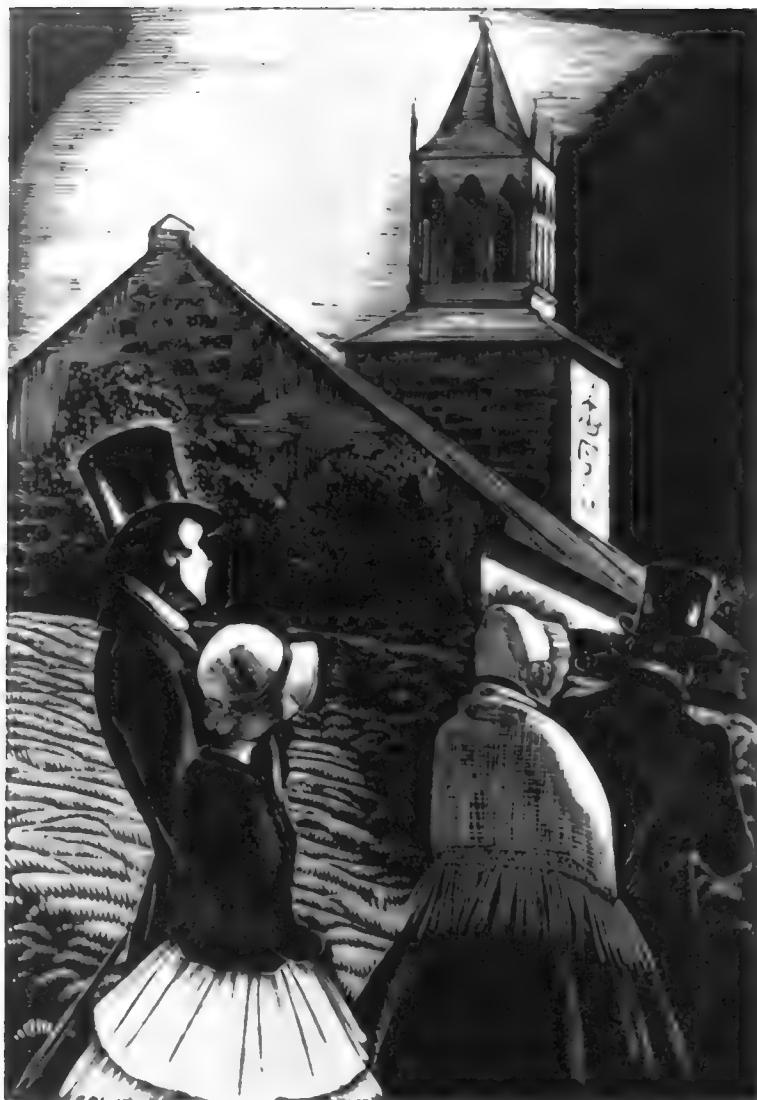


HEADINGLEY
Wood engraving, 1933.

scape painter for the study of all the effects of shadow and sunlight. Phillips' first "one-man" exhibition was held in Salisbury in November, 1911. It consisted of water-colours painted in Wiltshire, in the Scilly Islands, in Newlyn, Cornwall, and at Bridlington and Flamborough, Yorkshire. It was a success for a local newspaper records that "appreciation was shown in a practical manner by a purchase of a very considerable proportion of the pictures on view."

The two friends spent their summer holidays together and went as far afield as the Scilly Islands and Newlyn, Cornwall, where they could paint the scene, the rocky coast and the stone village with a zest heightened by the contrast with their everyday surroundings. The first picture which Phillips had exhibited at the Royal Academy was painted at Newlyn in 1912. These young painters were closely associated until Phillips left Salisbury and the bond was not broken until he had to learn with sorrow and in a far country of his friend's death in action during the first Great War. This much had Salisbury contributed to the growth of a personality, an artistic friendship with all the gracious and useful qualities which accompanied it but it was to contribute a much more important influence for it was there that he met his future wife. She lived at Wylde, a picturesque village about twelve miles from the city where he liked to paint. Phillips tells me, without an acknowledgment of what seems to me the trend of fate. Of course the village was picturesque and he liked to paint there. They were married in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral, and they continued to live in Salisbury until the summer of 1913.

The placidity of life in England at that time and what I might almost venture to call the monotony of the subject matter for painting became uncongenial or at least disturbing. Our artist had had the experience in South Africa of society in a formative



A WEDDING PROCESSION

Wood engraving from "Dreams of Fort Garry."

Courtesy of Stovel Co. Ltd., Winnipeg

state and of a land-and-seascape that was unfamiliar to the creative sense of this painter. It seemingly had not stimulated him and I find he makes no reference to any South African pictures but the life there was in memory, ever a contrast to the quiet of those Southern Counties of England and if he thought of his future there as a painter he could only imagine himself one of many depicting again and again the well-loved well-understood features of a country established in its age-long beauty. He thought of migrating but he did not think of South Africa, he thought of Canada, happily for him, I think, and assuredly happily for us. His wife agreed and they decided on Winnipeg as he tells me "for no particular reason". They paused there in June, 1913, there was plenty of distance beyond and no doubt a diversity of lands and living but they remained residents of Winnipeg for nearly thirty years. That city is a point of departure for all his work, he ventured into Ontario at Muskoka and the Lake of the Woods but the prairies, the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Coast were his appointed inspiration. I use this word "appointed" with purpose for, to my way of thinking, there should be harmony between the artist and his subject matter and there is virility and the spirit of adventure in Phillips' nature as an artist which is akin to our untamed vistas of half-settled country, our mountains without tradition, the vestiges of our aboriginal life and our strenuous way of existence. It is well for us and also for him that he chose the West as his home.

In this adventure he was supported by his wife. She had the strength to overcome the difficulties of her new environment and she has the charm both of appearance and manner which make her welcome in any society. In Winnipeg five of their children were born, their eldest boy was born in Salisbury. The family circle was unbroken until the younger of their two sons, Ivan, was killed in the War.

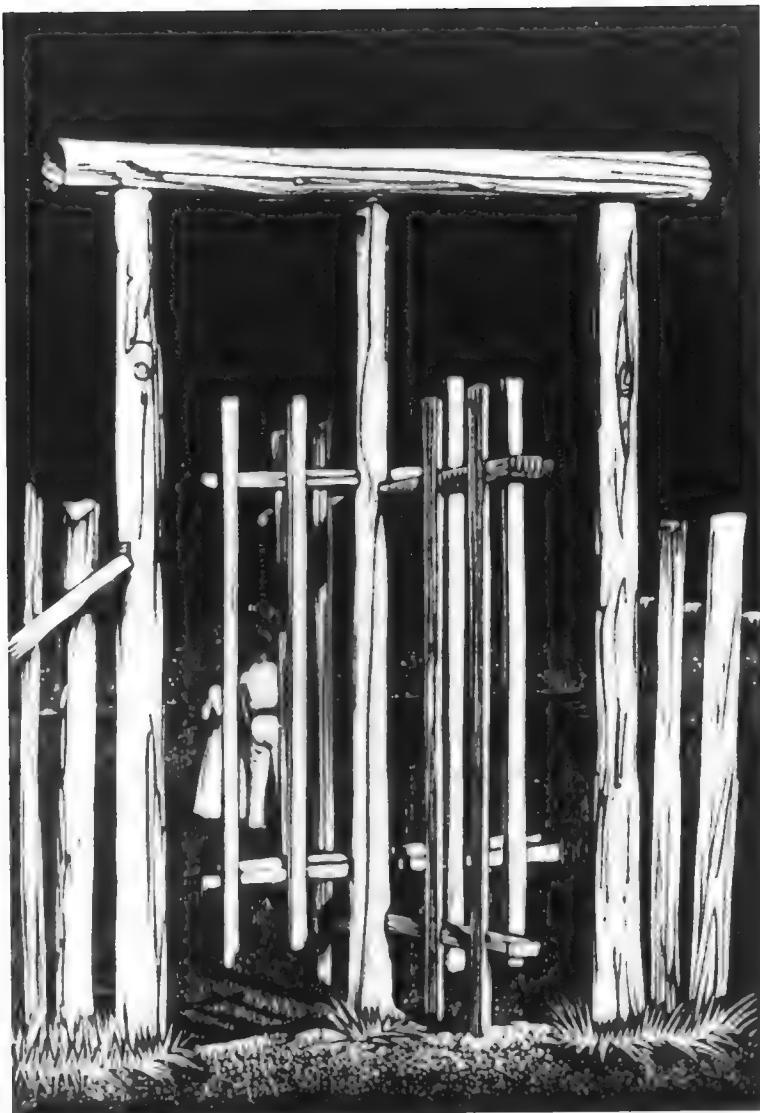
I am constrained to make a record of his military service here as his death not only affects life and therefore the lives I am dealing with but is typical of the loss to our national life, the weakening of the very fibre of Canada's being. When Ivan enlisted in the Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg he was married and when he died he left a widow and one baby son. He enlisted in June, 1940, as a private, towards the end of 1941 he was commissioned as lieutenant and in December, 1942, as a Captain. His sole purpose in joining the forces was to reach the front and to fight, to serve as Adjutant at Camp Shilo or to continue that useful function when he reached England in 1944 was seemingly not in line with that fatal ambition and it took a year of persuasion before he dropped a "pip" and was transferred to the Essex Scottish and found himself on the 22nd of February, 1945, in Holland. During the transfer he refused to take another administrative position at Ghent. He was permitted only two weeks of battle but they were of the bitterest. His regiment was thrown into the vital contest at Hochwold Forest and in Ivan's Company in one engagement at Xanten of ninety brave men who advanced only seventeen returned. Ivan was not one of them and he lies with his gallant comrades there. I give this record of his qualities, his urgency to fight as a soldier in the front line of this contest and to his bravery when put to the test. Many Canadian families have had such losses and this tribute given to Ivan Phillips is inclusive also of them. He knew what he was fighting for and gave his life for that cause. For him and for all others who did not return from the battle I retrace lines I wrote during the last war.

Master of life we thank Thee
That they were what they were.

Now I can write of a happier time. Surely there can be no greater contrast between two cities than between Salisbury and

Winnipeg, but I cannot find that the absence of a culture rooted deep in the past was regretted or that the new problems of a community developing not only its civic life but the life of the prairies as well, were ever feared, misunderstood or left unsolved. There was hard work ahead but he describes the first ten years in Winnipeg as "wonderful". At that time in the West there was no strong sympathy for Art but there were enlightened men who thought that it should be aroused and stimulated. Dr Daniel McIntyre, the Superintendent of Schools for Manitoba, took the practical step of appointing Phillips as Art Master at the new technical school, St John's, a position he held until 1924. This duty as teacher took from his pursuits as artist for it demanded his full time, but as he was determined to be an artist, time was found for the path of that ambition. Time there was not only for painting and teaching but for contributing a weekly column on Art to the Press and this served not only to make him felt as a factor in the life of the town but to compel him to settle his own views and to master a style to convey them. His love of music should not be overlooked. Music was a recreation not a task whether he listened to others make it or made it himself, for he spent time enough at the piano to cultivate that taste and to keep alive one of his earlier diversions.

In Winnipeg he formed a friendship with the etcher Cyril Barraud who taught him that art and whose press and tools he bought when Barraud went to France during the first war where he made many valued plates of the Canadian army and its scenes of action. Phillips etched a score of plates some of which are in The National Gallery of Canada, but he, ever longing for colour, was never at home in that medium. Then began his first efforts with the colour woodcuts. So congenial to his powers was this form that its development gave him international fame. In 1923 he had published forty-two colour woodcuts. I will



THE TURNSTILE

Wood engraving from "Dreams of Fort Garry."

Courtesy of Stovel Co. Ltd., Winnipeg

devote sections of this monograph to that and the other media in which Phillips has worked

Etchings, woodcuts, in black and white and in colour are available for collectors who have the fine taste for such fine things, but prints must be made known widely and in effect "marketed"

In 1923 Bromhead Cutts & Company of London, England, dealt with Phillips' prints and in 1924 Brown Robertson of New York became his agents. In this connection there is a paragraph in the notes the artist gave me which is very worth printing for its interesting content and for an unconscious revelation of the artist's character. Of the selection of Brown Robertson as a New York Agent he writes "The following year the firm of Brown Robertson of New York also became my agents. The latter event involved a curious coincidence, and an instance of the prudence of casting one's bread upon the waters. A friend in Salisbury came to Winnipeg at about the same time--1913--as I did, but unknown to me. I ran across him there inevitably and our friendship ripened. He married and left Winnipeg impulsively, and I heard no more of him for some years. Then came a telegram requesting an immediate loan of \$100. I sent it, but received no acknowledgment, and I heard no more from my friend. In 1924 I began looking for a New York agent for my colour prints. Brown Robertson Incorporated seemed the logical choice, since that firm seemed to have cornered the colour-print market. I wrote and there came a reply by special delivery. My friend had become secretary-treasurer of the firm. He returned the loan I had made him, with interest, and told the long tale of his adventures. Until the great slump in 1930 he advanced my work all over America, and in those six years made a splendid income for me. I have always been blessed with good friends--he was one of the best, and a fine character."

Until 1914 when he exhibited two landscapes at the Royal Academy, his subjects had been varied, figure-studies, portraits, still-life, but he always felt the truth of Constable's statement, "landscape is by far the most lovely department of painting." In 1924 he received his first International Award, the Storow Prize for the best colour print in the Los Angeles International Exhibition. It was the first of many recognitions of the fine quality of his work as he perfected his technique and proved the power of invention in adapting the honoured art of wood-engraving to unconventional subjects. To mention only a few here will not be out of place, in 1931 he was awarded the gold medal for merit by the Society of Arts, Boston, in 1933 and again in 1936 he received honorary mention in the Warsaw Woodcut International, in 1933 he was elected by acclamation a Member of the Royal Canadian Academy.

In 1924 he resigned his position in Winnipeg and in the summer he took his family for a visit of three months to Muskoka Lake and went on to England where they lived for ten months. One purpose of this visit was to join their friends William Giles and his wife, a sketching trip to Sicily during almond-blossom time had been planned but the death of Mrs Giles made that expedition impossible. William Giles was a well-known maker of colour prints and Phillips had corresponded with him for years on general subjects and in connection with the *Original Colour Print Magazine*. The financial support for this project was given by Mrs Giles and the magazine was discontinued after her death; only three of the annual numbers having been issued. Phillips was one of the Council of Management. Among his companions were such prominent print-makers as Sydney Lee, Allen W Seaby, Urushibara and Martin Hardie. The family lived in Wiltshire for six months and for three months in Cleeve Hill near Cheltenham. This visit led to many acquaintances and friendships.

with artists who had come to know and acclaim Phillips' work. He places the Japanese print-maker Y Urushibara as the most interesting personality, at least from that point of view, as he considered him the most accomplished living technician. He demonstrated for Phillips the Japanese method of sizing paper. He met Malcolm Salaman the critic who had praised Whistler's etchings when they were new and seemed revolutionary. Campbell Dodgson, C.B.E. and Martin Hardie, C.B.E. were among his admirers and they both later contributed forewords to collections of his woodcuts and colour woodcuts. In the Cotswolds Phillips met many of the artists working there. This prolonged visit was of definite value to him, it gave him opportunities for discussion with men who were treading the same path. It plunged him at once into an atmosphere that was congenial, which he lacked in Canada and it offered a comparison between the conditions of England in 1924-1925, which I think were none of the best, with the struggle in Western Canada. On the whole, the comparison favoured the association which had grown strong in Winnipeg and they returned at the end of June, 1925, "for the children's sake" and spent the remainder of that summer at Muskoka. The pictures he painted there formed a "one-man" show at Herbert Furst's Galleries, The Little Art Rooms, The Adelphi, London. At the end of September the family returned to Winnipeg and from 1926 he again reverted to his first standing as a professional artist. He became more and more interested in the mountains of the West and in the Pacific Coast as the regions most congenial to his character and in 1941 he moved to Calgary.

In 1940 he joined the staff of the Banff Summer School of Fine Arts and has been instructor and lecturer there since then. He found at Banff that the daily walk to the art school, the change of scene and contact with students was in all ways stimulating. He realized that he had been spending too much time in the Studio



MAMALILICOOLA

Colour woodcut, 1928.

and that too few hours were left for exercise and for social amenities. As time was at his disposal and as he was anxious to use his special faculties in any helpful way in the war-effort, he spent two weeks in Ottawa in 1940 in a vain endeavour. At this present writing he is still a resident of Calgary but has in view building an ideal house in Banff and residing there permanently. The family circle has narrowed to himself, his wife and his unmarried daughter, Josephine, who is a student at the Calgary Art School. The eldest son John is a successful commercial artist who has been employed with Brigden's Limited in Winnipeg since 1928. His three other daughters are married, the eldest has developed the inherited artistic instinct and has done notable work in design and in the field of home-crafts, chiefly needlework.

These words are merely the close of what I feel is an inadequate biographical sketch of an artist's life, they do not mark the close of an artist's career. When I remember that Phillips is in the prime of life with unimpaired vigour, with enthusiasm not only for his art but for the art of living, I can predict confidently that he will continue with increased power to be a sensitive interpreter of the Canadian scene, always governed by ideals that have made his work admired and honoured wherever it is known.

W A T E R C O L O U R S

At the outset of this attempt to review the work of W. J. Phillips, I have the feeling that I am beginning an adventure, but I protect myself against all hazards by using the word review instead of criticism. I have no command of the vocabulary used by the critics of painters and their pictures, and no technical knowledge of media and methods. My chief assets in dealing with his work are admiration for the beauty he has created and, by way of comparison, visual recollection of very many of the finest pictures in the world and a study of them, in so far as the

ability of an amateur, using that word in its first and best sense, can qualify for study. These give me confidence, and assurance is added to confidence by the selection of a few of his written words which I have chosen to reprint as they reveal his sympathy with nature, the very subject matter and inspiration of his art. While he acknowledges that his colour woodcuts have made him known in many countries where his water colours are not so widely distributed, he values first his achievement as a water colourist. With his water colours I have not had the intimate contact that I have had with many of his wood engravings and colour woodcuts, the former are in private collections and in public galleries, widely distributed but inaccessible, the latter are owned by the lovers of fine prints wherever they have had the good sense to acquire them for their own pleasure and that of their friends.

So I may assume a certain, though limited, authority in dealing with the work of the wood engraver and I can whole-heartedly agree with the artist when he places his accent on the water colour. It is his natural medium and it is based on sound tradition. He finds that water colour technique must be rapid to be effective; it affords no time for thought, it makes more demands on the physique than oil painting because of the mental concentration and effort involved. I may here quote some remarks of Martin Hardie which Phillips has somewhere used. He writes of Peter DeWint as, "one of those who can make colour sing, one of the few who can keep even his darks transparent, luminous and sparkling. No other artist has ever set on paper with more meaning and more purpose that brave, beautiful blot of untroubled colour, from a full flowing brush, which, as it dries out, transparent and rich in bloom, is the charm and essence of water colour art." These words account well for the affection Phillips has for this medium and the goal of perfection which is always before him.

This is, I think, the appropriate place to quote a short memorandum given me by Fred H Brigden, R.C.A., O.S.A., dealing with Phillips' work. Mr Brigden is one of our foremost water colourists and I am much indebted to him for this summing-up of our artist's work from an artist's point of view where experience and ideals exist in fellowship.

While Walter J Phillips, R.C.A., has long been recognized in International Art Centres as a leader in the field of colour block printing, it is not so generally known that he has through the years devoted a considerable part of his time to water colour painting, and that his work in this medium as in the block printing is outstanding, having unique qualities and placing him easily among the top ranking water colour men either in Canada or abroad.

Phillips' work in water colour is modern in that he carries forward the Cotman emphasis on design and form. At the same time, he has retained a respect for the technical traditions, and has succeeded to an unusual degree in mastering the difficulties which are met with at every stage, in the making of a water colour.

In this respect he differs from the majority of his contemporaries, who in their concentration on what is termed by the critics self expression often display a disregard for the technical qualities which, since the 18th century Englishmen have been considered essential, and which have established the medium in the high place it holds to-day with art lovers and connoisseurs.

A Phillips water colour has therefore a wide appeal. First there is always a well-thought-out design, often unusual and at all times satisfying. Invariably it is based on nature, but with selection and control of figure or landscape features to achieve the desired end. Phillips never feels it necessary to distort (or resort to distortion). He finds in nature truthfully recorded all the beauty of form and line needed. These latter are things especially to look for and enjoy in his work: the drawing of trees in detail or mass, the rhythmic lines of the countryside, the formation of mountain architecture, of the exciting



By permission of The National Gallery of Canada
JIM KING'S WHARF, ALERT BAY
Colour woodcut.

movement of rushing water, all delineated with special emphasis on the decorative patterns wherever in nature

Phillips has a fine feeling for colour. Each picture has its own scheme of colour, with pervading hue, its harmonies and contrasts. And lastly there is the masterly handling of the medium. A Phillips sky with its atmospheric depths and tender gradations is the last word in water colour manipulation. Any one who has attempted the medium will also appreciate the way in which washes are applied throughout the picture with the bloom of the paint undisturbed by rubbing or reworking, and the skill with which sparkling whites are left where required. In all this technical virtuosity Phillips is unexcelled on this continent and he might fitly be called the Russel Flint of Canada. It will be of interest to workers in the medium to know that Phillips like all great masters in water colour uses a restricted palette employing the fewest possible colours to obtain his effects.

The following is a list of his favourite colours. French ultramarine, monastral blue, pthalocyanine green, yellow ochre, pale cadmium yellow, deep cadmium yellow, raw umber, burnt sienna, light cadmium red, alizarin rose madder, light red or Indian red.

It is a matter of regret that the public generally has not had an opportunity of seeing the remarkable series of large water colours produced by Phillips in recent years. These have been quickly acquired by discerning buyers. If a loan exhibition could be arranged by the National Gallery it would be a major art event in the galleries across Canada.

I quote these genial words on Phillips as a water colourist with due acknowledgment for all we owe to Mr. Brigden for his discerning survey.

I was mindful of that remark of Constable's, which I have already quoted, "that landscape is by far the most lovely department of painting," and I asked Mr. Phillips to give me some notes on his favourite sketching grounds. What he gave me may read like an "interview", but better than any interview it is the man himself talking in an easy fashion, quite naturally, without the intervention of anyone else.



YORK BOATS AT NORWAY HOUSE
Water colour.

Courtesy of Hudson's Bay Company

When you asked the other day what I considered to be the best sketching ground in Canada, the question prompted some thought. I replied, "Wherever I happen to be." After all, the locale does not matter. It is light I paint—the sun, and its corollary, colour. As we crossed the prairies yesterday I could not help thinking how very much I had enjoyed painting them when I lived in Winnipeg. The vast dome of the sky predominated—the earth a mere base for its support. I learned there the importance of designing a good sky. The little things below—the elevator, hillock, trees, a group of flowers, and such things loom large. You can see an elevator ten miles away as you drive along a prairie road. We used to drive so much, and over such uninteresting ground, that elevators were glimpsed with joy. They stood up like beacons, and betokened a village, with gas or food, or whatever our needs might be. I have a warm feeling for the elevator. Someone said that it expressed the only original architectural thought in the history of Canada. I painted many pictures with the elevator as the chief figure in the composition. Once I had a show in which most of the pictures were of this type. Closing day came without a sale. The idea was too new I suppose, but people came back one by one and within a month or two all were sold.

Buyers attach much more importance to subject—assuming that the elevator as in this instance is the subject—than I do. I maintain that light is my subject and the elevator may as well be a mountain, or anything else. Mountains are spectacular, and the layman imagines they are pictures in themselves, but I have spent days among the peaks when I have shuddered at the sight of them, when they seemed, even when the sun was shining, devoid of any grace of colour, or even form. But when the light is right—there are golden days that are indescribably beautiful—there are pictures everywhere.

I like the mountains best in winter when the golden light is more frequent, the sun is low and casts long shadows, and the snow hides the too insistent detail. My favourite spots are above timberline in summer, away from the hideous monotony of summer green. Within reach of Lake O'Hara are many good places—the Odaray shelf, Opabin plateau, Lake McArthur and



By permission of The National Gallery of Canada

KARLUKWEES

© National Gallery of Canada

the trail to Abbot's Pass I have always enjoyed Moraine Lake because of the easy access to Wenckchemna Best of all are the ski lodges I enjoy Sunshine Valley, with the adjacent moors, quite bare of trees, and the magnificent peak of Assiniboine.

My wife and I walk for miles looking for paintable waterfalls Now that I live in Calgary I get to the mountains easily and I find many subjects there.

I have also painted on the Pacific Coast formerly using Alert Bay as a centre It is within practicable reach of Kingcome and Knight Inlets and only forty miles or so from Village Island on which are the native towns of Mamalilicoola Karlukwees, and Tsatsisnukomi Here are ten-thousand-foot mountain peaks that come sheer down to the sea Here is much mist and fog and a softer light Here are strange monuments and a type of Indian I had not met before Travel is by boat alone I have been inspired by trips up and down the West Coast because of its strangeness and grandeur That is the chief value of fine scenery to the landscape painter—it piques his interest and makes him work Lately I stayed a month at the home of one of my daughters at the coast. Sketching was strictly forbidden during the war in this vicinity but I found plenty to occupy me in an adjoining cow-pasture, where some maple trees grow, and did not look elsewhere Most artists will find materials for pictures in their own backyards, as I do

It seemed absurd to me when a firm of publishers went to the expense of chartering a plane to take me up to a rather inaccessible waterfall in Northern Manitoba so that I could paint a portrait of it More so that when I reached the spot the falls looked no more interesting than a sewer

I am content to make pictures wherever I happen to be If the backyard fails to interest me I can go indoors and paint a picture of a window or a stairway, or set up a still life of cabbages and tomatoes, or pots and pans from the kitchen, or flowers

From 1914 to 1924 I painted mostly at Lake of the Woods— pictures of rocks, water, trees and sky From 1925 to 1935 I painted on the prairies From 1936 until now I have found most of my material in the Rockies The West Coast has given me some subjects from 1926 to the present day.

This reads like the itinerary of a craftsman who looks on landscape with a "predatory eye," but that is only part of the story Frederick Wedmore wrote, years ago, "great art of any kind is not a mere craft or sleight of hand to be practised from the wrist downwards. It is the expression of the man himself."

The reproduction here of the water colour *LAKE McARTHUR* is an example of the result of these mountain wanderings. This lake is above the timberline, rising, treeless, in the pure air, and Phillips is inclined to think, after all his eyes have seen in the Rocky Mountains, that it is the most beautiful of all the lakes in that region which holds so much that is lovely in its iron grasp. The original is half-imperial size (approximately $21\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ inches). It was painted from a sketch made in 1936 and was purchased by the Art Association of Montreal in 1940. Inevitably the total charm of an original must be lost in even the best colour reproduction. In this excellent example, however, the observer may note the qualities so aptly dwelt upon by Mr. Brigden, "its harmonies and contrasts, its depths and tender gradations."

To give glimpses of the ideality, the inner vision which is the essence of our artist's translation of nature, I have chosen a few passages from his writings. They may be read with his pictures in mind, not as interpretation but simply as evidence that the scene depicted was observed with depth of feeling for whatever was there characteristic and beautiful.

Surprise is an essential element of beauty, it is sublimation of the element of contrast, without which beauty would be non-existent, like the desert that blossomed as the rose, it claims attention by its improbability and incongruence and inspires the sensation of excitement. The discovery of a boss of moss-campion high on a mountain-side is as thrilling an experience as finding a diamond in a mass of gravel after sorting and washing monotonously for weeks. I liked the flower best, it was unexpected, it shone, a pink and violet convexity close to the ground, close up

to the snow, far above the trees and other vegetation a bright jewel in a drab setting. How it shone! No need to drag weary limbs up the scree to gain proximity—we raced up, weariness forgotten. So it is often with the wild flower, it appears unexpectedly, a magic inflorescence. The prairie "crocus" lifts its purple head through the stubble, even through the snow, the *mamaleria* burgeons in a waste of sun-bleached grass.

What poor and shabby things they seem in a garden. Transplanted they lose the precious quality of wilding, of splendid isolation. In a garden, of course, mass is the unit, and the arrangement of masses is the source of beauty, but in nature, the unit is the flower, the single plant or the single tree. The thought is aptly applied to the display of pictures, in this day pictures are not given a chance. They are hung close together in the home or the gallery, redundancy makes them mutually destructive.

Colour is a secondary thing in art, form is essential. Colour exists only by virtue of light, form is eternal. Michelangelo denied the importance of colour. Rembrandt contented himself with yellow ochre, black, sienna and light red. Zorn was equally temperate. Yet colour remains the most expressive agent the artist employs and the most flexible. By analogy or association it has more power to move the heart of the beholder than form or line. We speak of warm colours and cold colours—the former are the visible attributes of fire, the latter of ice. The same classifications symbolize respectively passion and serenity. Because colour is so evanescent, so subtle, and flexible, it is impossible to dogmatize upon it. On other occasions I have taken individual hues and discussed their abstract and physical qualities and their relations to life. That kind of study has always been interesting. The trouble is that so very few painters ever attempt to materialize their dreams of fine colour—landscape painters in particular. Their feet are too firmly set upon the ground. They are content to imitate the commonest manifestations of colour in nature and produce pictures, which represent the norm of the effect prevailing during the time they made their outdoors studies.



FALLS BELOW LAKE OESSA

Water colour.

Courtesy of Mrs. F. G. Garbutt, Calif.

There are infinitely more pictures painted in the sunlight of high noon, with a threadbare scheme of greens and blues, than of dawn or twilight, or night. At dawn the painter is asleep, and at twilight he is enjoying his dinner. The best effects of colour in nature are fleeting; they are harder to reproduce than the settled effects of ordinary daylight. How virile and various by contrast are the water colours of Turner. He portrayed nature in every mood, employing colour chiefly as his vehicle. Turner's method gave scope to his fancy. He did not finish his water colour on the spot. His sketches were outlines, and these he filled in and embellished at the end of the day, or at some later and more convenient date in his studio. This method demands a deep knowledge of nature, a good memory, power of observation, and the scheme of colour must be complete in the mind, so that there is no experimental fumbling in the process of painting. Water colour technique must be rapid to be effective, it affords no time for thought. As a matter of fact it makes more demands on the physique than oil painting because of the mental concentration and effort involved. The point I want to make is that colour will reflect mood far more effectively than will line and form.

The artist looks on landscape with a predatory eye, mindful of what may be appropriated therefrom. The natural landscape and the landscape as composed by Mr Dauber are two very different things. The picture has but one plane, lacking depth or distance, it is confined within the static walls of a rectangle, instead of being limitless, it is entirely devoid of movement—a timeless heath without wind, it is but part of a panorama—a line of poetry torn from its context, it has one texture instead of many, and its luminosity is a muted parody on the effulgence of the light of day, or the insubstantial shimmer of starlight. The painter's job is to compose these differences, by selection, arrangement, unification and other devices.

Clouds are, perhaps, of all the forms of nature, the most important to the landscape painter. Their variety in shape and character makes them adaptable in design, and in definite fixture to the expression of every mood from violence to tranquillity. The sky is the great reservoir of light, light is the whole of beauty.

A clear sky is a monotonous affair, a mere void, clouds enliven it, they temper its brilliance; they embroider upon the field of blue ever-changing patterns in white and gold and grey. The painter who systematically neglects or scamps his skies works under a heavy handicap. He confines his attention to things near at hand, he keeps his feet upon the ground, and knows nothing of the exaltation of the spirit arising from the contemplation of infinite space. When I see a young artist who regards the clouds carefully, I feel sure he will reap his reward in the genre of landscape.

By this method, by the aid of Mr. Brigden and Mr. Phillips himself and by plundering some of the riches the latter has stored up in the pages of newspapers and magazines I feel that the reader will gain an impression of the value and beauty of his work as a water colourist and of the constant devotion to nature which has inspired it.

WOOD ENGRAVINGS

When I turn from the art of water colour to the lesser art of wood engraving I seem to have a greater confidence, which may be quite ill-founded. In fact so strong is my affection for wood-cuts, formed in early association with what were in those days of the dearth of art in Canada the only things available that gave any idea to a youngster of the beauty of things called "pictures", that I feel compunction in calling it a lesser art. But when a handicraft comes between the original conception and its realization I reluctantly think of it as a lesser art. Water colour is in reality "drawing in colour," and a woodcut is one ancient means of making widely available a painted picture with the colour absent and only the design left, although frequently it is itself an original design. I think only of the "youngster," myself, who was, like Phillips, brought up in a Methodist parson-

age, and only of the fortunate youngster whose early memory goes back to the days when *Good Words* and *Good Words for the Young* came every month into the home, and to the bound volumes of those periodicals which had been carefully preserved I do not know what illustrated magazines now come into parsonages but assuredly they do not exhibit the work of such masters as Millais, Sandys, Pinwell, Houghton, Rossetti and Holman Hunt I stop there for I do not intend to indulge in a list of names or to elaborate the point These illustrations drawn on the wood by the artists and engraved by the Brothers Dalziel are true creations They gave and still give me pleasure, and the *Works of Eminent Masters*, volumes issued by Cassell & Co, served to shadow forth the works of celebrated painters They were seen through a mist but their beauty could not be all destroyed. These books were the possessions of happy children brought up by indulgent parents whose influence was ever for the best in letters, music and in art, who encouraged every evidence of talent These remarks are all personal, altogether beside the subject, which is the wood engravings of W J Phillips but they serve the writer himself to come a little closer to the subject

Mr Phillips has not told me why he took up the graving-tools and intermittently forsook the brush He has proved that it was an instinct and he fortunately gave way to it Etching was to him an uncongenial art, he confesses that he "abominated the cold unresponsive nature of metal, the smell of acid and oil and the dirtiness of printing inks" I regret these reproachful terms as I am devoted to etchings when they are good etchings and I take from them what I expect and do not think of colour, no more than I think of the "colour" of an orchestra when I hear the perfection of a string quartet

Not content with wood engraving he used various media, oils, paste with water colour for landscape, and gouache In 1926 he



Courtesy of the Woodcut Society, Kansas City, U.S.A.

VISTA LAKE

Wood engraving, 1932.

was interested in egg-tempera and painted the portrait THE CHINESE ROBE and three or four 40-inch landscapes. In this connection I quote an amusing disquisition on the treatment of the egg, the one essential factor in this process:

The painter in tempera believes in the egg implicitly. He is somewhat fanatical about it. You should see how delicately, how reverently, he handles it. He cracks it on the edge of the dish, and pours out the albumen. Now he picks up the yolk by the little piece of membrane that adheres to it; he rolls it into the other hand while he dries the soiled member on his apron. He passes the golden ball from hand to hand until it is dry, picks it up as before, carefully punctures it—and thus the precious ichor is extracted, to be used to bind his pigments and the sac is thrown away.

In his list of wood engravings (black and white) I find the earliest date 1929 and the latest 1942, with sixty-four items, but these include book illustrations, grouped under one number, so that his activity cannot be measured by numbers alone. In any of these prints I have seen, Phillips, to my satisfaction, proves himself a master of the graver. I can call upon a greater authority to uphold that verdict. In a short foreword to a collection of Phillips' *Woodcuts*, Campbell Dodgson, C.B.E., formerly Keeper of Prints, British Museum, writes "His prints are engravings, to name them cuts would do them wrong. Technically they are white line work of extreme refinement." In closing his appreciation he says:

"The foliage of the fir is rendered with great ability in *HANGING ROCK ISLAND*, and in the same print minute white dots model to perfection the bodies of the deer. Attention to details, however, must not divert the eye from the rhythm in the whole design of this beautiful engraving, than which I know only one that seems yet more complete in its wide range of 'colour' and technical resources. *VISTA LAKE, CANADIAN ROCKIES*."



KINGCOME

Wood engraving, 1937.

VISTA LAKE is reproduced here as one of the black and white illustrations. It was made in 1932 especially for the Wood Cut Society, Kansas City. Another, and one of his latest, is KINGCOME INLET, 1933. I would draw attention to the weird power in this print; it seems to me to depict a native of that region with only a veneer of what we call civilization facing a vestige of aboriginal culture. Kingcome Inlet is on the coast of British Columbia near Alert Bay. The Indian is warned from the coast by a threatening figure, the import of which he may not fully realize, but his boat is of native design. He could not improve on that for his life purposes and he clings to it, but the fetish that faces him bears no message. The villagers that erected it have disappeared and with it the feeling that made the uncouth figure alive with awesome pride. The gulls swooping around are careless of both, and obey an instinct that has not altered for years beyond number. The moment is treated by the artist as drama. In the foreground the sea with lines of disturbance in the water that will relapse into calm and in the background the silent mountains with their slow-moving glaciers and as the sole conscious actor this fisherman who has neither full possession of what we call "our civilization" nor of his racial traditions, afloat, lost and speechless between both. This interpretation must not divert the observer from what Campbell Dodgson has called, referring to another example, "The rhythm in the whole design," that rhythm is present in KINGCOME INLET and is in fact the source of the strange power of this print and is but another evidence of Phillips' "wide range of colour and technical resources."

COLOUR WOODCUTS

To do full justice to this method of print-making as practised now one should call the result "original colour woodcuts," but the title would be overloaded perhaps as the collector must or should have knowledge of the difference between the ancient practice as it came to us from Japan and the present western usage which has developed into an original art in which the artist has full command. The Japanese colour print as we know it, examples of which are even too common in late reproductions, was not an ancient art. Tradition places the first issues of prints in colour in the early 18th century and the artists with whom we are most familiar were born in that century. Hokusai, one of the great masters, who described himself as "the old man mad about drawing," lived through almost half of the 19th century. It is not my purpose, even if I had the competency, to write an essay on the Japanese colour woodcut but merely to put the emphasis on that word "original." The Japanese print was the work of three men, the artist, the wood engraver and the printer. A print as produced by Phillips is the work of one man. He makes the design in colour and does both the engraving and the printing and the result is original in a sense which does not apply to the old divided effort. The basic handicraft is the same, the wood is cut by "witty hands," guided by the controlled conception of the artist to produce the designed effect. I have borrowed that phrase "witty hands" from a sentence somewhere in the wonderful pages of Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, he applies it to the Arabs or the Bedouins and it is remembered as it describes the feeling I have for all master craftsmen who use their hands delicately in fashioning beautiful things. The hands themselves seem to have a conscious and independent power, a "wit" that is all their own to follow the line and to avoid error.

I think it is easy to understand why Phillips was led to forsake the wood engraving in black and white for the colour woodcut. His true atmosphere is colour and he has said "Colour remains the most expressive agent the artist employs" He must have been familiar with Japanese colour prints, they became known to Europeans about 1856 or 1857, but they did not stir artists of those years with any desire to explore the secrets of their production, they certainly influenced painters but not engravers. There are two versions of their discovery and the reader may take his choice. One is that in 1856 Bracquamond, the French painter-etcher, noticed a print wrapped round an imported specimen of oriental china. His astonishment may be well understood, it was a print designed by Hokusai, the other is that Monet the French painter found in 1857 certain prints used by a Zaandam grocer as covering for his butter and cheese. My verdict goes to Bracquamond, probably because I dislike cheese and all its varieties, and I cannot separate the Monet legend from the malodour of the Dutch cheese-shop.

It was not until early in the 19th century that certain wood engravers began to experiment. The English exponents were J D Batten, F Morley Fletcher and Allen W Seaby of London. Phillips' memory, always in colour, led him to remember an article by Allen W Seaby on printing from wood-blocks. He re-read it, and "The mutation from dream to accomplishment resulted". He began to experiment blindly and is original even in that sense, but he cheerfully acknowledges his indebtedness to Morley Fletcher through Seaby. Now he is the peer of any contemporary and in one sense the leader for his book *The Technique of the Colour Woodcut* published in 1926 is still the standard work on the subject.

This is no place for a discussion on "technique" even if the writer were able to offer any personal views on such a subject.



YORK BOAT ON LAKE WINNIPEG

© James M. Smith 1944

but something must be said about a process which progressively gives such beautiful results Mr Phillips treats the matter with a light touch on the seventeenth page of his book "Regarded technically the craft is the simplest ever devised It is the oldest too No press is necessary, nothing save a plank and a knife to make the engraving, and paper, colour, brushes, with a printing pad to secure an impression" That sounds like simplicity simplified but even for the artist there is more to it than that The basis of a wood engraving is a single wood-block from which impressions can be taken in one colour The bases of the colour woodcut are a number of engraved wood-blocks, one for each colour, which are assembled and used by the artist to recreate his design in the chosen colours I have already put in a plea for the designation "original" for the modern method, and would again make the point that in Japan there was collaboration between three persons and in looking at a Phillips print we have the inspiration and the touch of one man alone, it is in all truth original I cheerfully leave the reader to the expert guidance of Mr Phillips in his text book through the precarious process of making a colour woodcut when there is "no room for accident" It is here appropriate to quote from Mr Martin Hardie's introduction to *The Canadian Scene. Seven Colour Prints* by Mr Phillips. Mr Hardie, C B E, R I, R E, was formerly Keeper of the Department of Engraving, etc at the Victoria and Albert Museum He is a fine etcher and has also colour woodcuts to his credit and this tribute to the perfection of Mr Phillips' prints follows close upon the description of the limits and the inherent difficulties of the art

High among these adventurers of to-day stands Mr. W. J. Phillips Like his predecessors, he has realized the natural limitations of the method which he has chosen. Colour which is applied, not directly, but under pressure from flat spaces of a wood surface, will not respond to the artist's intention like fluid

colour applied with a brush. There is here no room for accident, no place for those chance half-tones, those blurred edges, those little pearly drops of translucent colour that give charm to the water colour drawing. The maker of the colour woodcut has a deliberately restricted sphere. He must accept and overcome all the exigencies and limitations that his method imposes. He differs from the water colour painter, or from any man who draws or even writes, in that he is never putting down with almost unconscious finger tips what brain and eye are telling him. He cannot, like the painter in oil or water colour, see his work grow under his eye. He has to translate, he has to build slowly and carefully, he is bound to analyse and simplify, to search out a definite and constructive design, he must contract and concentrate, and never expand, he must extract the essence of colour, as the etcher extracts the essence of line. A growing power of analytic design is manifest in each new series of Mr. Phillips' woodcuts, and in each series we find a more triumphant conquest of the difficulties inherent in his craft.

This just praise goes hand in hand with the professional associations which I have mentioned in the biographical section, friendships with men who also made their mark in this development of wood engraving.

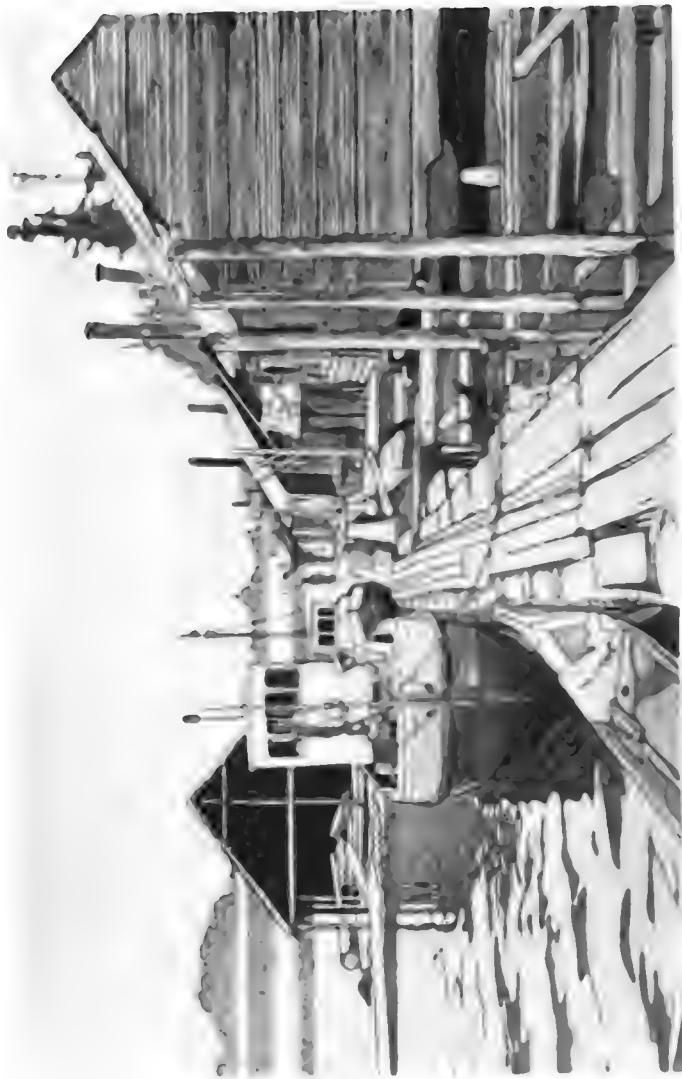
In the dissertation which follows Mr. Hardie's introduction, Mr. Phillips gives his views on the subject of pictures "in the home," which I think are diverting to quote. The words criticize the walls of the present writer and I should feel like stripping them bare and acquiring a solander box if I wholly agreed with them.

A large number of estimable people stick pictures all over their walls all they like and may contrive to acquire, and they rush to the framers whenever they come by something new and admirable. They are like the lady who wears all her dresses at once. A picture that becomes a mere unit in a scheme of decoration, loses much of its individual charm. A small picture, especially a print or a drawing, loses everything. It is properly

viewed at arm's length. When it appears on an opposite wall fifteen feet away, it tantalizes rather than charms, it becomes unimportant, even contemptible, when a stiff-neck or a bent back is the price you pay for a closer view of it. In your home, familiarity soon dissipates its appeal; the element of surprise, which adds so much to our sense of beauty, soon vanishes. Eventually, it is taken for granted and excites no emotion whatever. The Japanese custom of changing their hanging pictures periodically is as necessary to us as to them, but I know of no one who does it, excepting only artists who are obliged to. Even at that, I would see too much of one picture. The portfolio, or the solande box, is the thing. You get it out only when you are in the mood to enjoy its contents. You sit in comfort and your enjoyment is perfect, because you have achieved perfect conditions.

The reader will probably think this a digression from the main line of the treatment of the colour woodcut but it is not so far off if you consider, as I do, the motive that lies behind the intention of our artist, i.e., to make a picture individual in all aspects, not to be confused in its beauty by an ill-assorted grouping of others foreign to its spirit. This sense of individuality has given Phillips' colour woodcuts a well-earned international reputation. As William Giles wrote twenty years ago, "He came to the colour print with the painter's vision and his prints represent his outlook on art—the beauties of the visible world as he sees it." The subject matter of his prints aided their acceptance for the beauties of the world as he saw them were singular and regional, many of them interpretive of landscapes and of aspects of life, aboriginal and otherwise, that were new to the observer. But this novelty would not have prevailed without consummate skill in presentation.

In the reproductions herewith in black and white there will be found three examples of colour woodcuts. The colour in these prints emphasizes their appeal. In my opinion *YORK BOAT ON*



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LAKE WINNIPEG and MAMALILICOOLA are two of his absolute successes. In the YORK BOAT the onrush of the craft, built for such waters, driven by a following wind, with its crew at leisure, is realized, and the gull accommodating its speed to that of the boat seems to embody the friendly spirits of water and wind. MAMALILICOOLA is a faithful reproduction of the dilapidated water-front of a British Columbia coast Indian village, with totem poles aloft and two figures toiling up the stairway, the woman, as usual, bearing the burden. The treatment of the sky in this print is worth special remark for it makes for the truth of the picture. The clouds are the vaporous clouds of that region, in subtle gradations of grey, and what there is of sky seems full of mist.

The two reproductions in colour of colour woodcuts may well stand as prime examples of his work and I chose them from the list of 139 prints which are various both in subject and treatment. I should like to have presented a view of an elevator which Phillips, as you have read, "has a warm feeling for," as an object in the prairie-scene, and which he has often used "as the chief figure in the composition," of many pictures. As atmosphere and colour are his strong points these useful but angular structures, subject to all the mutations of the climate of the prairies, would naturally attract him. I have experienced some transfiguration of these useful objects, wavering with the desperate heat of August, standing forth against a sunset of rich colour and of lingering depth, or bravely waiting for the onset of a hail storm shot with lightning, or without any such aids obeying their function of pouring grain into freight cars, and I have found, as our artist has, a place for the elevator in the landscape. They are capable of taking on impressions that vary with the changes of light and the disturbances of storm and cloud. One is reminded of Whistler's words when he writes of Thames-side and the

treatment of some of his pictures "When the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry as a veil and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky and the tall buildings become Campanili and the warehouses are palaces in the night." So the elevator, and Mr Phillips has found beauty in the gaunt forms and their surroundings

But these two examples must serve in the present connection. Mr Phillips has enabled me to give an analysis of their upbuilding. *JIM KING'S WHARF, ALERT BAY*, is mainly outline from a pencil sketch. Eight blocks were cut and printed, there are two greys and each of these is enriched in part by pure pale colour overprinted, for example, in the distant mountains blue, purple and grey is printed over grey, there is pure green on part of the roof and green over grey in the reflections, the same with red. In *KARLUKWEES*, a winter aspect of an Indian village or fishing station on the British Columbia coast, eight blocks were cut, eight colours and eight printings, the snowflakes were cut out of two and three blocks and had to register correctly. I find subtlety of colour throughout in this print, particularly in the gradations of grey on the snow along the beach. But the colour only serves a perfect design.

This is one of my favourite prints and for me it has a tireless interest so that I may be allowed to touch upon it. It is a scene of desolation but not of desolation, the natives will return some day and draw up their boats on the sand from the sea that looks almost tideless. Meanwhile snow takes the only action in a breathless moment, it descends in purity through air that does not disturb its tranquil fall, it lies without drift or ripple on the houses and the beach, and will disappear without trace when it touches the water.

This sketch from the beginning of the biography to the last word has been an attempt to present a personality. By quoting

some few of his opinions on art and the artist's life, the remarks of critics who were won into friendship by his aims and his manifest ability and by mingling, perhaps, too many of my own observations. I hope I have succeeded in showing Walter J Phillips' individuality—as man and artist, his immense activity, his interest in life and his love of nature, all contributing to the sincerity and devotion which are the chief characteristics of his work. He was granted a vision of the beauties of earth and the power to interpret the vision.



Courtesy of Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd

THE TAMING OF THE WINGED HORSE

Pen drawing

A W A R D S

1924 STORROW PRIZE for the best colour woodcut California Print-makers International Exhibition, at Los Angeles, U.S.A.
1931 GOLD MEDAL awarded for merit by the Society of Arts, Boston.
1926 BRONZE MEDAL for best woodcut in colour, Graphic Arts, Toronto
1933 HON MENTION—Warsaw Woodcut International
1936 HON MENTION—Warsaw Woodcut International.

S O C I E T I E S

ROYAL CANADIAN ACADEMY—elected by acclamation 1933
CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOUR—Past Vice-President.
PRINT MAKERS SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA
PRAIRIE PRINT MAKERS
MANITOBA SOCIETY OF ARTISTS—Past President
GRAVER PRINTERS IN COLOUR (London)
CANADIAN PAINTER ETCHERS

C L U B S

ARTS AND LETTERS CLUB, Toronto.
RANCHMEN'S CLUB, Calgary.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE COLOUR WOOD CUT. Brown Robertson, Inc.
TEN CANADIAN COLOUR PRINTS. Introduction by Dr Duncan Campbell
Scott (Nelson & Sons Ltd)

THE CANADIAN SCENE Introduction by Martin Hardie, R I, R E (Nelson & Sons Ltd)

ESSAYS IN WOOD Introduction by Dr Marius Barbeau (Nelson & Sons Ltd)

WINTER WOOD CUTS (Nelson & Sons Ltd)

TEN WOOD CUTS (Nelson & Sons Ltd)

Numerous contributions to magazines in England and the United States, and a weekly column "Art and Artists" in the *Winnipeg Tribune*, 1926-1942

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS CONTAINING ARTICLES ON THE ARTIST AND REPRODUCTIONS OF HIS WORK

AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART—Jan 24, 1924, an illustrated article "Walter J Phillips"

BLOCK PRINTER, by Edna Gearhart

THE STUDIO and THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIO—articles illustrated in colour

THE CANADIAN THINKER, May, 1939—W J Phillips, R C A, by E W Sellors, illustrated

THE ORIGINAL COLOUR PRINT MAGAZINE, June, 1925—'Notes on the Wood-cuts by Walter J Phillips' by William Giles

FINE PRINTS OF THE YEAR, 1924—one illustration

THE WOODCUT ANNUAL FOR 1925—with frontispiece in colour

THE WOODCUT OF TO-DAY, 1927—two illustrations, one in colour

THE NEW WOODCUT, 1930—two illustrations, one in colour

THE PASSING SHOW, April, 1931, 'The Wood Block' illustrated

WINNIPEG TO-DAY Stovel Co Ltd — with fourteen reproductions in colour.

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE IN CANADA—M O Hammond, Ryerson Press

CANADIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS—A H Robson, Ryerson Press

CANADIAN ART—William Colgate, Ryerson Press

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR BOOKS

HIGHROADS TO READING—Books IV, V, and VI (Nelson) Pen drawings and water colours

DREAMS OF FORT GARRY—By Robert Watson, (Stovel Co Ltd), 20 wood engravings

DOLLARD—(Nelson), Pen drawings

CANADA—By Stephen Leacock Four wash drawings and one water colour

JOHNNY CHINOOK—By Robert Gard (Longmans Green), Pen drawings, and jacket in gouache

THE TRANSPLANTED—By Frederick Niven, (Collins) Jacket in gouache

DEATH OF PILRROT—By Harry A V Green Wood engravings

WOMEN OF RED RIVER —Frontispiece in colours

COLOUR IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES —By Frederick Niven, (Nelson) 32 illustrations in colour, 32 pen drawings

CANADIAN MOSAIC—John Murray Gibbon, (McClelland & Stewart) Eight drawings in coloured chalks

THE FIRST WINTER—H G Herklots, (Dent) Wood engravings

WORKS IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

WATER COLOURS AND OILS

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, OTTAWA, PUBLIC ARCHIVES, OTTAWA, ART ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL, THE ART GALLERY OF TORONTO, HART HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, WINNIPEG ART GALLERY, WESLEY COLLEGE, WINNIPEG, NUTANA COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, SASKATOON, DARKE HALL, REGINA, EDMONTON MUSEUM OF ARTS

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PRINTS SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED

Woodcuts

- "SUMMER" For The Original Colour Print Magazine
- 'THE ANGLER' For The Technique of the Colour Wood Cut"
- 'ECKINGTON BRIDGE" For The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers
- 'OAK' For The Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers
- 'FISHING' For J MacPherson, Esq
- "A SETTING FOR A POEM" For R W Craig, Esq
- "ABOVE LAKE LOUISE" For The Wood Cut Society, Kansas City, U.S.A.

Wood Engravings

- "VISTA LAKE" For The Wood Cut Society, Kansas City, U.S.A.

WOOD ENGRAVINGS

- 1 1929 NEWTONBROOK
- 2 1930 'ESSAYS IN WOOD' published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, Toronto:
Dugout
- 3 The Hoh-Hok house-posts at Karlukwees
- 4 House of the Gulls
- 5 Zunuk
- 6 Shacks on the Beach
- 7 Ruin, Isatsisnukomi
- 8 Thunderbird, Alert Bay
- 9 The Clothes-line, Mamalilicoola
- 10 The Floating Dock, Mamalilicoola
- 11 Community Houses, Mamalilicoola
- 12 1930 VALLEY OF THE TEN PEAKS
- 13 1930 MORaine LAKE
- 14 1931 RUSHING RIVER, Lake of the Woods
- 15 1931 SNAKE ISLAND, Lake Winnipeg
- 16 1931 ILLUSTRATION for 'The Master of Ballantrae'
- 17 1931 ILLUSTRATIONS for 'Dreams of Fort Garry', published by
The Stovel Company Limited, Winnipeg
- 18 York Boats under Sail
- 19 St. Andrew's Church, 1850
- 20 The South Wall of the Fort to-day
- 21 Distant View of St. Andrew's Church
- 22 The Factor's Daughter
- 23 The Sundial
- 23 The Flood of 1857

24 Red River in Winter
25 The Turnstile
26 York Boats racing up the river
27 Indian girl by the Wall
28 St. Andrew's
29 Dog Teams on the River
30 The Flood 2
31 The Ice comes down
32 Unloading the Pieces—York Boats
33 Wolsley's soldiers come
34 Red River Jig
35 Riel climbs the Wall
36 Metis assemble
37 Cover—South Wall
38 1931 S W BASTION, Lower Fort Garry
39 1931 ENGINLER'S HOUSE AND SOUTH WALL
40 1932 LILY
41 1932 HANGING ROCK ISLAND No 1
42 1932 HANGING ROCK ISLAND No 2
43 1932 ZUNUK
44 1932 STOCKTON, MAN
45 1932 VISTA LAKE
46 1932 SWANS
47 1932 COOK'S CREEK
48 1932 MOON AND MIST, YORK BOATS
49 1933 LACLU
50 1933 BANFF SPRINGS HOTEL
51 1933 SIMOOM No 1
52 1933 KINGCOME No 1
53 1933 TOTEMS
54 1933 KINGCOME No 2
55 1933 SIMOOM No. 2
56 1933 HEADINGLEY
57 1934 WATERFALL, Lake of the Woods
58 1934 HEADINGLEY
59 1934 BOOKPLATE FOR H A V GREEN, Esq
60 1934 ILLUSTRATION for "My First Winter"
61 1937 MISTAYA VALLEY
62 1939 BOOKPLATE FOR MISS ELLEN A. HOFFMAN
63 1942 THE BEAR

COLOUR WOODCUTS

No	Year	Title	Edition	Size
1	1917	WINTER	50	5½ x 9½
2	1917	DYING PINES	50	9½ x 4½
3	1918	THE GOLDEN HOUR	50	6¾ x 6¾
4	1918	ROSIL	50	5½ x 4½
5	1918	THE LAKE	50	5¼ x 4¾
6	1918	WINTER IN WINNIPEG	50	4 x 5½
7	1918	WHITE WILDERNESS	50	10½ x 5¾
8	1918	MARGARET	50	4¼ round
9	1918	THE LITTLE SASKATCHEWAN	50	5½ x 10
10	1918	THE ISLAND	50	5 x 9¾
11	1919	FALL, LAKE WINNIPEG	50	5¾ x 7¼
12	1919	THE WATERFALL	50	5 x 6
13	1919	THE PATH OF GOLD	50	5 x 10
14	1919	CROWE'S ISLAND, LAKE OF THE WOODS	50	10 x 4¾
15	1919	WHITEFISH BAY, LAKE OF THE WOODS	50	
16	1919	WINNIPEG RIVER AT MINAKI	50	7 x 7½
17	1919	VILAS PARK, MADISON	50	4½ x 10¾
18	1919	SUNSET, LAKE OF THE WOODS	50	8½ x 11¾
19	1920	NORMAN BAY, LAKE OF THE WOODS	50	11½ x 8¾
20	1920	WINTER SUNSHINE		4 x 4¾
21	1920	RUSHING RIVER, LAKE OF THE WOODS	50	6½ x 7
22	1920	WILLOW DRIVE, MADISON	50	3¾ x 11½
23	1920	MARY AT THE LAKE	50	10½ x 4¾
24	1920	MARGARET WITH A DOLL	50	app 5 x 3
25	1920	A SUBURBAN STREET		3½ x 6
26	1921	GLOAMING	50	9½ x 8¾
27	1921	LAKL LILIES	50	5 x 11¾
28	1921	TWO LAKES	50	8½ x 13¾
29	1921	HOLIDAY TIME	50	2½ x 11
30	1921	EVENING	50	7¾ x 7¼
31	1921	BEDTIME		5¾ x 3¾
32	1922	LONG BAY, KEEWATIN	50	7¼ x 14
33	1922	THE DOCK	100	7¼ x 10¾
34	1922	EVENING CLOUD	2	12¼ x 18
35	1922	TRUE SHADOW ON SNOW		4 x 6

No	Year	Title	Edition	Size
36	1923	REST	100	7 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
37	1923	RED RIVER ROAD	100	8 x 8
38	1923	THE BATHER	100	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{8}$
39	1923	ST. ANDREWS ON THE RFD	100	7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$
40	1923	NORMAN BAY NO. 2	100	8 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
41	1923	SNOW BANK		4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
42	1923	FLYING ISLAND	100	10 x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
43	1924	MORNING	150	7 x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
44	1924	POUND LILIES	10	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$
45	1924	THE BATWING SAIL	150	7 x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
46	1924	WYLYE VALE		3 x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
47	1925	SUMMER		5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$
48	1925	WYLYE MILL BRIDGE	100	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{7}{8}$
49	1925	THE FIELD BARN	100	8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 10
50	1925	THE LILY		1 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$
51	1926	SUMMER IDYLL	100	18 x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$
52	1926	THE ANGLER		4 x 2 $\frac{7}{8}$
53	1926	MARY AT MUSKOCA	100	5 x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$
54	1926	A GLOUCESTER VILLAGE	100	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10
55	1926	MOUNTAIN TORRENT	100	8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$
56	1926	MOUNTAIN LARCH	30	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9
57	1926	ALPINE MEADOW		3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4
58	1926	LITTLE WHITE HOUSE		3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
59	1926	WINIER WOODS		3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
60	1926	WINTER EVENING		3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
61	1926	THE BEACH	100	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
62	1927	MOUNT SCHAFFER	100	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10
63	1927	MOUNT CATHEDRAL FROM LAKE O'HARA	200	7 x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$
64	1927	MUSKOCA SUNSET	200	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$
65	1927	CATHCART'S ISLAND, MUSKOCA	200	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
66	1927	WINTER ON THE RED RIVER	200	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{5}{8}$
67	1927	MOONLIGHT, LAKE OF THE WOODS	200	7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6
68	1927	THE MOUNTAIN	200	6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$
69	1927	A WINNIPEG STREET	200	4 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$
70	1927	WATER LILIES	200	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{3}{8}$
71	1927	RAIN, LAKE OF THE WOODS	200	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9
72	1927	WILD CHERRY	200	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$

No	Year	Title	Edition	Size
73	1927	JIM KING'S WHARF, ALERT BAY	100	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$
74	1927	FLUCHSIA		4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3
75	1927	THE BATHER No. 2	100	8 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
76	1927	BOOKPLATE FOR M C WALSTON, ESQ		2 x 3
77	1928	MAHALILICOOLA, B C	100	12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 14
78	1928	THE WATERFRONT, ALERT BAY	250	6 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{8}$
79	1928	SIWASH HOUSE POSTS	250	8 x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$
80	1928	JOHN	250	6 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$
81	1928	CINERARIA	250	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$
82	1928	MOUNT STEPHEN	250	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{7}{8}$
83	1928	THE STUMP	250	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9
84	1928	SUNSET, LAKE OF THE WOODS	250	7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$
85	1928	TULIPS	100	8 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$
86	1928	NASTURTIUMS	150	6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7
87	1928	ZINNIAS	100	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ sq
88	1928	BREDON VILLAGE	100	9 x 12
89	1928	POMPOMS		3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
90	1929	KARLUKWIHS, B C	100	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$
91	1929	ASSINIBOINE RIVER FROM BIG SPRINGS		3 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$
92	1929	ECKINGTON BRIDGE	50	6 x 8
93	1930	PLANTING A ZLNUK	150	12 x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$
94	1930	VENUS AND THE PRIEST	100	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 18
95	1930	THE DIVING BOARD		
96	1930	OAK		4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
97	1930	YORK BOAT ON LAKE WINNIPEG	150	10 x 13 $\frac{5}{8}$
98	1930	APRIL IN THE COTSWOLDS	100	7 x 8 $\frac{7}{8}$
99	1930	SOFT MAPLE		4 x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
100	1931	POPLAR BAY, LAKE OF THE WOODS	150	9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$
101	1931	LA SALLE	250	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$
102	1931	LAKE McARTHUR	250	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{8}$
103	1931	LAKE OF THE WOODS	250	6 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$
104	1931	WARREN'S LANDING	250	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$
105	1931	SUMMER NIGHT	250	7 x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$
106	1931	THE DIVING BOARD (second state)	250	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
107	1931	AUTUMN, ASSINIBOINE RIVER	250	6 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 10
108	1931	FISHING	50	3 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$
109	1933	OUR STREET		3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6

No	Year	Title	Edition	Size
110	1934	MANITOBA FARMSTEAD	100	7½ x 13
111	1934	GIMLI HARBOUR	100	8 x 12½
112	1934	HNAUSA	50	11½ x 17¼
113	1934	RIME		4¾ x 4½
114	1934	MRS R. W. CRAIG MEMORIAL a setting for a poem	34	10¾ x 7½
115	1935	GIMLI	100	8 x 10
116	1935	GERRAN'S BAY, B.C.	100	8½ x 11¾
117	1935	HOWE SOUND, B.C.	100	10½ x 12½
118	1935	SMOKE, LAKE OF THE WOODS	200	5¾ x 8¾
119	1935	OPEN WATER		4¼ x 4½
120	1935	SIMOON, B.C.	100	6 x 11
121	1936	AGAMEMNON CHANNEL, B.C.	200	3¼ x 8½
122	1936	TOTEMS, ALERT BAY		6 x 3¼
123	1938	"THE VAPOURS 'ROUND THE MOUNTAIN CURL'D"	100	9 x 11
124	1938	LA RIVIERE		4½ x 4½
125	1940	LAKE LOUISE	100	7½ x 11¾
126	1940	JACK PINE	100	8¾ x 10
127	1940	MOUNT NICHOLAS		4¾ x 5
128	1941	LEAF OF GOLD	100	9¾ x 13
129	1941	CORRAL AT BANFF		4½ x 3½
130	1942	MOUNTAIN ROAD	100	9 x 13
131	1942	THE DUCK HUNTER	100	9¾ x 13¼
132	1942	CHURCH AT MORLEY, ALTA.		3½ x 3½
133	1943	SKI LODGE	100	11 x 7¼
134	1943	PRairie ELEVATOR	100	8¾ x 13
135	1943	TRAIL FROM SKOKI		3½ x 4
136	1944	BEAVER LODGE	100	7½ x 14½
137	1944	TUNNEL MOUNTAIN	100	7½ x 14½
138	1945	ABOVE LAKE LOUISE	200	7½ x 6¾
139	1945	SKI TRAIL		4 x 3

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